

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 NEA-10 IO-11 ISO-00 EURE-00 SAM-01 SSO-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4438

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY LOURENCO MARQUES

USMISSION USUN NY IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR

USNAVEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 0702

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PFOR, UN, SS, SP, AL, MO

SUBJ: SEVERE THREAT TO MAGHREB PEACE SEEN BY SPANISH

1. IN THE WAKE OF HIGH-LEVEL EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN TO THE SECRETARY DURING HIS VISIT TO MADRID OVER THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN THE SAHARA, EMBOFF FOLLOWED UP WITH THE MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS. MFA HAD ALSO GIVEN ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN A COPY OF A MEMORANDUM GIBEN BY THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR TO THE UN TO SYG WALDHEIM ON JAN 19, RELATING TO POSSIBLE UN ACTIVITY FOLLOWING UP UNGA RESOLUTION 3458 (PARTS A AND B) ON SAHARAN DECOLONIZATION.

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2. THE MFA MEMORANDUM (FULL TEXT BY SEPTTEL) STATED GOS WILLINGNESS

TO ASSIST UNSYG IN HAVING A UN REP VISIT THE SAHARA "AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT" TO EVALUATE THE SITUATION FIRST-HAND WITH RESPECT TO THE "INALTERABLE RIGHT OF ALL SAHARANS TO SELF-DETERMINATION." MEMORANDUM CONCLUDES BY SAYING THAT MFA HAS ALSO REQUESTED THE COLLABORATION OF MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA IN TAKING THE "NECESSARY MEASURES TO CARRY OUT THE AFOREMENTIONED RESOLUTION."

3. IN FOLLOW-UP MTG AT MFA JAN 27, DIRECTOR FOR NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS (AGUIRBENGEOA) TOLD EMBOFF THAT UNLESS SOMETHING WERE DONE TO CLARIFY LEGAL STATUS OF SAHARA IN THE UN BEFORE SPAIN'S DEFINITIVE DEPARTURE FEB 28 THERE WOULD BE A LEGAL VACUUM IN WHICH MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIA WOULD APPEAR TO BE ENGAGED IN AN ILLEGAL COLONIAL OCCUPATION. THIS WOULD EMBOLDEN THE INSURGENT F POLISARIO--BACKED BY ALGERIA AND POSSIBLY OTHERS -- TO DECLARE ITSELF THE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SAHARAN PEOPLE'S RECOGNIZED RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION INSCRIBED IN BOTH PARTS OF RESOLUTION 3458. (AGUIRBENGEOA SHOWED EMBOFF TELEGRAM FROM ALGIERS REPORTING THAT OAU COMMITTEE ON LIBERATION ADOPTED A MOTION JAN 25 IN LOURECNO MARQUES RECOMMENDING TO THE OAU MINISTER THE RECOGNITION OF F POLISARIO AS THE LEGITIMATE REPS OF THE SAHARANS.) ACCORDING TO MFA, SHOULD THE F POLISARIO, WHICH IS ALREADY FIGHTING SPORADICALLY IN THE SAHARA, MOROCCO, AND MAURITANIA, ACQUIRE LEGITIMACY IN THE OAU, THEN A REAL THREAT FOR EXPANDED, PROLONGED INSURGENCY WOULD ENSUE, ENFEEBLING MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA AND UPSETTING THE EQUILIBRIUM IN THE MAGHREB. THE MFA FEARED THIS REPERCUSSION ON THE MIDDLE EAST MIGHT ADD A NEW FOCUS OF TENSION BETWEEN THE US AND THE USSR.

4. MFA SEES THE UN AS THE ONLY AVAILABLE VENUE FOR AVOIDING FURTHER DETERIORATION IN THE SAHARA. UNLESS THE FINAL DECOLONIZATION OF THE SAHARA IS SANCTIONED INTERNATIONALLY ALGERIA -- WHICH HOLDS THE KEY TO THE INSURGENCY -- HAS NO WAY TO SAVE FACE EXCEPT TO CONTINUE ITS SUPPORT FOR THE F POLISARIO. IN MFA VIEW, MOROCCO, WHICH HAS NOT REPLIED TO GOS REQUEST, REFERRED TO IN MFA MEMORANDUM TO UN SYG, IS UNLIKELY TO SEEK BILATERAL ACCOMMODATION WITH ALGERIA AND MAY NOT BE AMENABLE TO FURTHER COLLABORATION TO CARRY OUT UNGA RESOLUTION. MAURITANIA, WHICH ALSO HAS NOT RESPONDED TO MFA REQUEST, MAY

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PROVE MORE AMENABLE TO UN FOLLOW-UP INASMUCH AS IT IS THE WEAKEST OF THE PARTIES.

5. MFA DIRECTOR POINTED OUT THAT EVEN THOUGH PARTS A AND B OF UNGA RES CONFLICT ON THE MANNER OF ASCERTAINING SAHARAN ASPIRATIONS, I.E. REFERENDUM VS. CONSULTATION OF VIEWS, BOTH REFER TO THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION. (THE SCATTERING OF THE YEMAA HAS ROBBED THE TRIPARTITE ADMINISTRATION OF THE

OPPORTUNITY OF CONSULTING IT WITH RESPECT TO SAHARAN DESIRES.)
IN MFA VIEW, A UN REPRESENTATIVE MIGHT SUCCEED IN FINDING
MEANS OF SATISFYING UNGA RES'S REQUIREMENT FOR SELF-DETERMINAT-
ION WHILE ALSO PRESERVING MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN INTERESTS.
(THIS BEGS THE QUESTION OF WHETHER ALGERIA WOULD THEN BE SATISFIED.)

6. THE HIGH-LEVEL SPANISH CONCERN, NOW ELABORATED ON BY
THE MFA, HAS TO BE READ IN THE LIGHT OF THE SPANISH DESIRE
TO PUT IN THE BEST LIGHT THEIR PRUDENT BUT PRECIPITATE DEPARTURE
FROM THE SAHARA IN ORDER TO AVOID WARFARE AT THE TIME OF THE
GREEN MARCH. WE NEVERTHELESS HAVE LITTLE REASON TO DOUBT
THEIR GENUINE CONCERN LEST THIS CONFLICT DETERIORATE FURTHER
INTO A MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN WAR AND PLUNGE THE MAHGREB INTO
PROTRACTED AND DANGEROUS INSTABILITY. REPORTS IN THE PRESS
TODAY THAT MOROCCAN AND ALGERIAN REGULARS HAVE CLASHED MAY ADD
GREATER URGENCY TO THESE CONCERNS.

7. IN VIEW OF LEVEL OF CONCERN AMONG HIGH GOS OFFICIALS
WITH TREND OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SAHARA AND THE MAGHREB
EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE BEING BROUGHT UP-TO-DATE ON STATUS
OF PERTINENT UN RESOLUTION AND ANY OTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH
RESPECT TO SAHARA IN UN FORUM.
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